

The Random Jottings of Donald Jay from Nelson Lancashire.

In the heart of Nelson, Lancashire, nestled amidst the rugged landscape, stood the solemn remnants of a once vibrant industrial era. The Nelson Highways Department on Charles Street, weathered by time and neglect, held within its walls the echoes of a bygone time. Among its forgotten relics were the ghosts of the old Tar Boilers, silent witnesses to the passage of decades. Billy Wild known as Billy Chips and Mick Brennan, the stalwart Tar Boiler men, were legends in their own right. They had laboured tirelessly, their hands stained with the viscous black substance that paved the arteries of the town. Together, they forged connections in molten tar, weaving the very veins that kept Nelson pulsing with life.

As the years swept by, progress marched on, leaving behind the Tar Boilers as relics of a fading era. The streets that once echoed with the rhythmic clink of shovels against metal, now stood silent, save for the occasional sigh of the wind.

Billy Chips and Mick Brennan, inseparable in life, found their final rest in the town's quiet burial grounds on Walton Lane. Their names etched in stone, they became part of Nelson's history, interwoven with the very streets they had helped build.

Yet, legends have a peculiar way of refusing to fade entirely. In the stillness of the night, when the moon cast an eerie glow upon the old council yards, whispers began to stir. Some claimed to hear the distant clatter of tools, as if the Tar Boiler men were hard at work once more, tending to the town they loved.

Rumours of apparitions, shadowy figures in tattered work clothes, began to circulate. They spoke of Billy Chips and Mick Brennan, reunited in a spectral labour of love. Together, they stoked the fires of the long-forgotten boilers, their ethereal hands guiding the flow of molten tar. Local children, with wide-eyed wonder, would gather near the old yards, daring one another to approach. Some swore they saw flickering lights and heard faint, ghostly laughter dancing on the wind.

As the seasons changed, and the years rolled on, the legend of Billy Chips and Mick Brennan became an inseparable part of Nelson's tapestry. They were no longer just men, but spirits bound by devotion to their craft and their town.

The Nelson Highways Department on Charles Street, though abandoned and forlorn, held within its time-worn walls a legacy that refused to fade. The ghosts of the old Tar Boilers, though long gone, continued to watch over Nelson, Lancashire, weaving their spectral threads into the very fabric of the town's soul.

By Donald Jay